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(54) A cassette containing flexible tubing to be dispensed therefrom

(57) In a cassette for dispensing flexible tubing (4), e.g. for packaging, the tubing is packed in a tightly layered mass between a tubular core (1) and the vertical wall of a casing (2, 3). Subsequently a cap (5) is mounted in the casing (2) with a flange (6) partially overlapping the pack. The cap is secured against rising by detent means such as tongues punched out of the wall portion (8) that engage in a groove (11) in the cap. Other detents such as dimples or an embossed ring may be used.

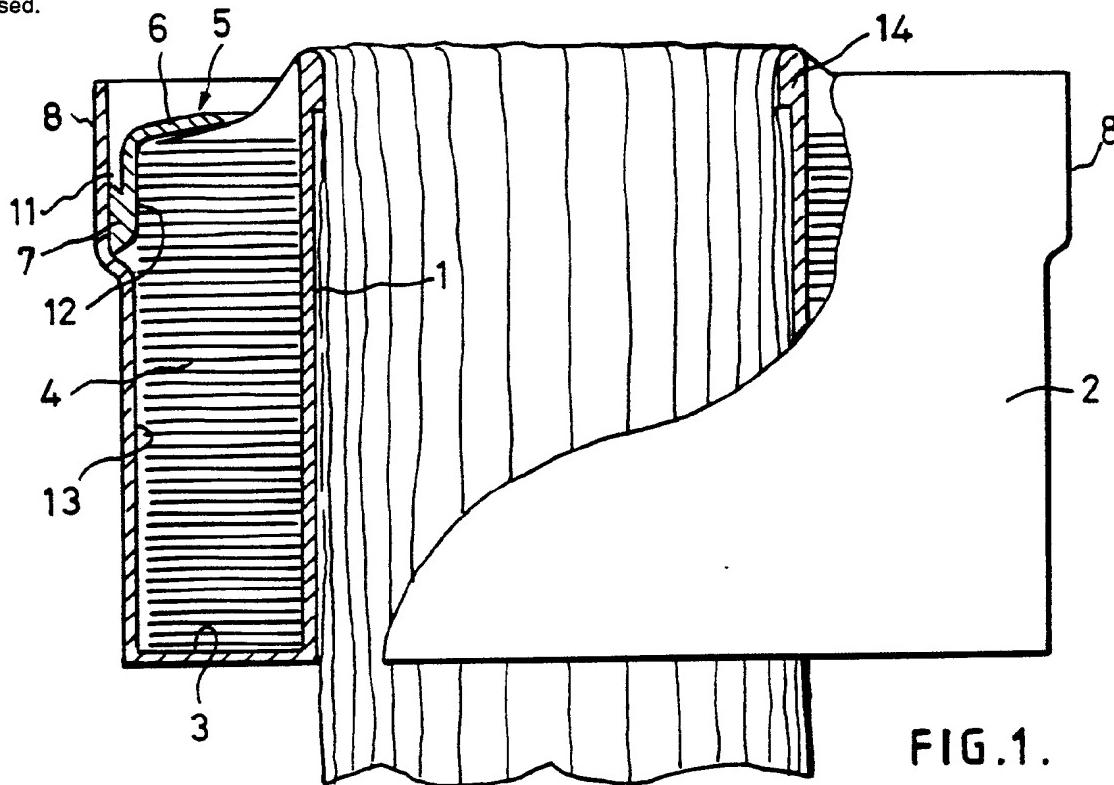


FIG.1.

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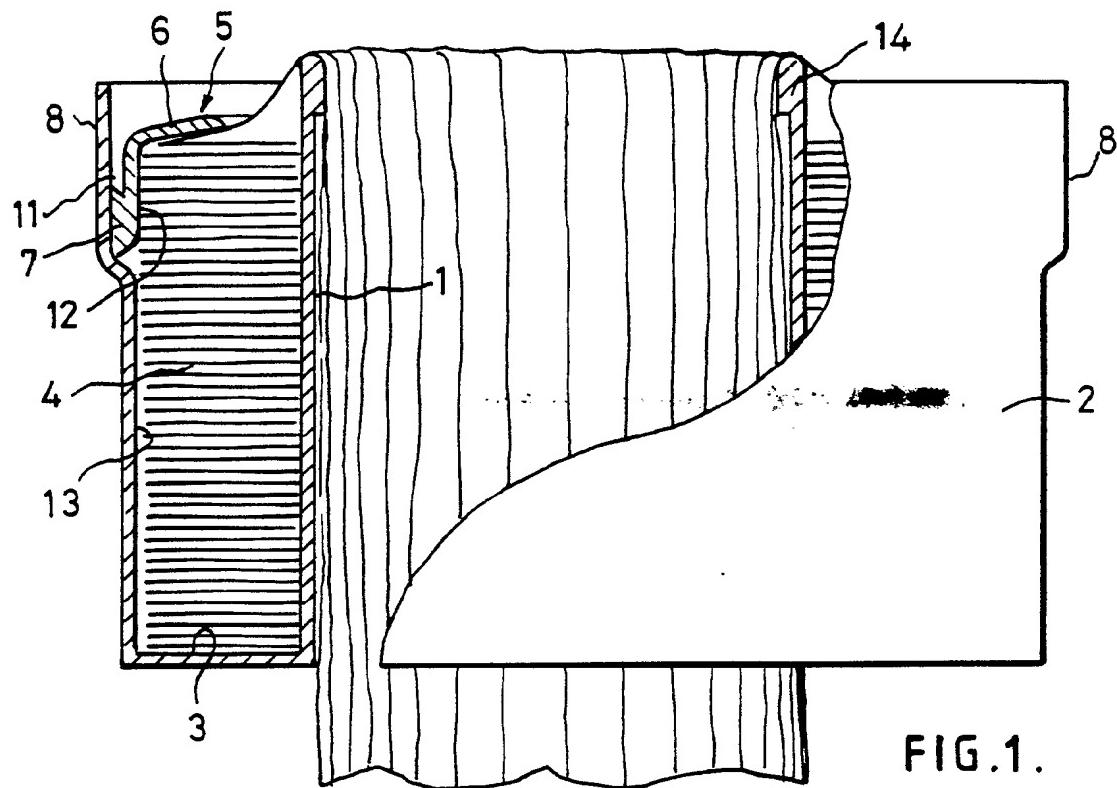


FIG. 1.

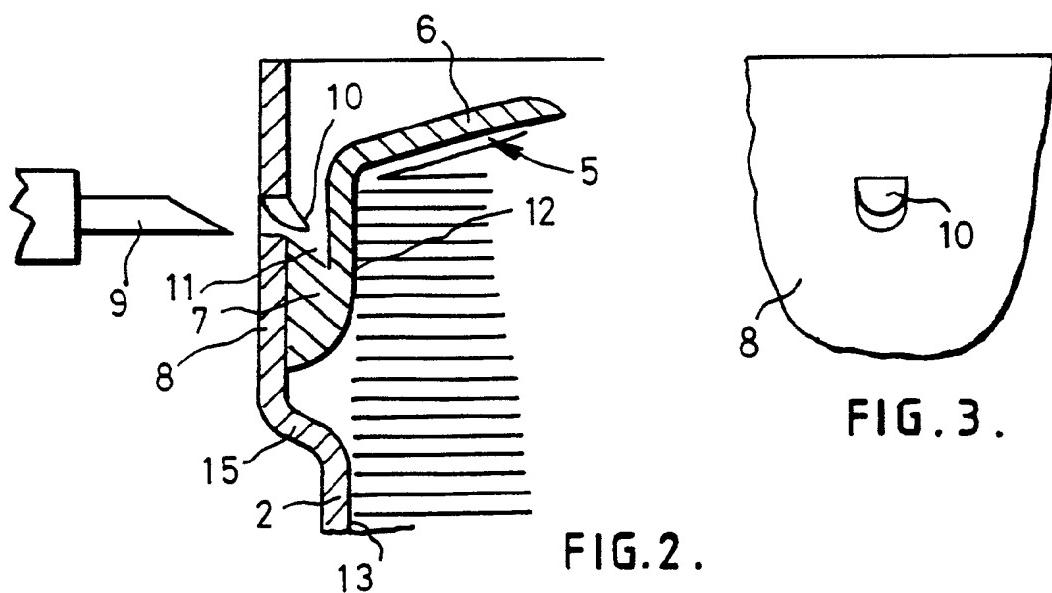


FIG. 2.

FIG. 3.

**A CASSETTE CONTAINING FLEXIBLE TUBING
TO BE DISPENSED THEREFROM**

This invention relates to a cassette containing flexible tubing to be dispensed therefrom. Such a 5 cassette can be located in a position from which the tubing is required and when the tubing is exhausted, the cassette can readily and easily be replaced by a similar full cassette. One situation in which such a cassette can advantageously be used is packaging apparatus as 10 described in European patent application No.88301761.8

One object of the invention is to provide a cassette that is very well adapted for mass and rapid production by mechanical means and is compact yet capable of containing 100 ft (30.48 m) of tubing, for example.

15 According to the invention, a cassette containing flexible substantially non-resilient tubing comprises a rigid body having a central core open at top and bottom and a surrounding casing joined to the lower end of the core by an annular base wall, the tubing being packed 20 profusely in a tightly layered mass between the core and the casing and an annular cap placed over the pack of tubing subsequently to the formation thereof and shaped to extend inwards, from the periphery of the casing towards, but not as far as, the core, detent means 25 operative after mounting the cap being provided on the casing for limiting upward movement of the cap within the casing, the cassette being arranged for the tubing to be dispensed by passing from the top of the pack, between the cap and core, over the top edge of the core and 30 downwards through the core. One advantageous form of detent means comprises tongues bent slightly inwards from the casing wall to engage the periphery of the cap so as to limit upward movement of the cap. Such tongues maybe formed from the casing wall after mounting the cap. 35 Alternatively the tongues maybe formed initially on the casing wall for the cap to snap past them on being mounted.

The cap may be formed with a cylindrical part and a

flange that projects over the pack from the top of the cylindrical part and the top of the casing may be expanded to receive the cylindrical part. This arrangement considerably facilitates the assembly of the cassette and its use, when the diameter of the cylindrical part is equal to the diameter of the unexpanded portion of the casing. It is understood that the terms "top" and "bottom" in this specification are simply used to indicate the relative positions of the parts of the cassette, the "top" being the area at which the tubing is discharged from the pack. Obviously the cassette may be mounted in a variety of positions, for example, with its axis horizontal.

In order that the invention may be clearly understood and readily carried into effect a cassette for dispensing flexible tubular material will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 is a side elevation, partly in section, 20 of the cassette;

Figure 2 is an enlargement of part of Figure 1, showing more detail; and

Figure 3 is a front elevation of part of Figure 2.

Referring to Figure 1, the body of the cassette 25 consists of a rigid moulding of plastics material comprising a central cylindrical core 1, open at top and bottom and a cylindrical casing 2, open at the top, and having an annular base wall 3 joining the lower ends of the core and casing.

30 Packed in the cassette between the core and casing is a mass or pack of profusely and tightly layered non-resilient tubing 4, which may for example, be high density polyethylene tubing.

After the tubing has been packed an annular cap 5 35 is placed over the pack of tubing 4. This cap 5 has a top flange 6 that extends inwards towards, but not as far as, the core 1 from a cylindrical part 7 that has a portion bearing against the inner surface of an expanded

portion 8 of the casing 2. To prevent the cap 5 from rising undesirably after it has been mounted, three bevelled piercing tools 9 (Figure 2) distributed equidistantly round the casing are simultaneously 5 operated to form three tongues 10 bent inwards from portion 8 of the casing to engage in an annular V-shaped groove 11 formed in the cylindrical part 7 of the cap 5. When the cap is mounted, the tubing pack 4 is slightly compressed and then immediately released whereupon the 10 groove 11 is lifted to the tongues 10.

It has proved highly desirable, both from the point of view of the assembly of the cassette and of its use for the inner cylindrical surface 12 of the cylindrical part 7 of the cap to have precisely the same diameter as 15 the inner surface 13 of the unexpanded portion of the casing 2.

In use the cassette is mounted in a support or device such as the packaging device described in European patent application No. 88301761.8 and the 20 flexible tubing is pulled or pushed (if the end of the tubing is first closed) through the core 1, the tubing passing from the pack 4 between the flange 6 and core 1 and then over the top edge of the core which is slightly expanded at 14 to provide a curved edge to avoid damage 25 to the tubing.

As the flexible tubing is used, the pack shrinks downwards and to prevent the cap 5 from descending and perhaps getting wedged in the casing, the junction 15 at the bottom of the casing expansion 18 acts as a stop.

30 For tubing of approximately 8 or 9 inches (20 or 23 cm) diameter, the diameter of the core 1 may be approximately 4 inches (10.16 cm). These figures are, of course, only by way of example, and a wide range of sizes is possible.

35 Various modifications of the cassette described above may be made without departing from the scope of the following claims. For example, in the case of a thermoplastic body dimples may be formed inside the

casing (by the external application of hot points) to engage a circumferential groove on the cap. Moreover, it is not essential for the tongues 10 to be formed after the cap 5 has been inserted. They may constitute initial 5 portions of the body prior to filling. Then after the flexible tubing has been packed, the cap is thrust into the body with sufficient force for its edge to snap past the tongues which will then take up positions that prevent the cap from rising in the body. Instead of 10 tongues small dimples or other shallow protuberances or even a shallow embossed ring may be formed on the inside surface of the casing past which the cap is to snap on being mounted.

Apparatus for packing cassettes as described above 15 with layered or pleated flexible tubing is described in GB Patent Application No. 89140645.4

CLAIMS

1. A cassette containing flexible, substantially non-resilient tubing comprising a rigid body having a central core open at top and bottom and a surrounding casing joined to the lower end of the core by an annular base wall, the tubing being packed profusely in a tightly layered mass between the core and the casing and an annular cap placed over the pack of tubing subsequently to the formation thereof and shaped to extend inwards, from the periphery of the casing towards, but not as far as, the core, detent means formed after mounting the cap being provided for limiting upward movement of the cap within the casing, the cassette being arranged for the tubing to be dispensed by passing from the top of the pack, between the cap and core, over the top edge of the core and downwards through the core.

2. A cassette according to claim 1, in which the detent means comprise tongues bent inwards from the casing wall by piercing means and arranged to engage the cap to limit upward movement of the cap.

3. A cassette according to claim 1 or claim 2, in which the cap is formed with a cylindrical part and a flange that projects over the pack from the top of the cylindrical part and the top of the casing is expanded to receive the cylindrical part, the inner surface of the cylindrical part having a diameter equal to the diameter of the inner surface of the unexpanded portion of the casing, the casing being cylindrical.

4. A cassette according to claims 2 and 3, in which the cylindrical part of the cap is formed on its outer surface with a groove to be engaged by the tongues.

5. A cassette according to claim 3 or claim 4, in which the transition between the expanded portion of the casing and the unexpanded portion of the casing is arranged to limit any downward movement of the cap in the casing.

6. A cassette according to Claim 1, in which the detent means are protuberances distributed round the

internal surface of the casing and arranged for the cap to snap past the protuberances when being located over the pack of tubing.

7. A cassette substantially as hereinbefore
5 described with reference to the accompanying drawings.